

Lead Entity Advisory Group Report

January 20, 2005

SRFB Meeting / February 10, 2005
Doug Osterman, LEAG Chair

Attendees-

Doug Osterman- King 9	Kristi Lynett- WDFW
Britt Dudek- Foster Creek CD	Mark Wachtel- WDFW
Paul Dorn- E Kitsap	Bruce Crawford- SRFB
Kim Bredensteiner- Island County	Tim Smith- WDFW
David Hoopes- San Juan CD	Steve Leider- GSRO
Mike Kuttel Jr.- WRIA 13 & 14	Neil Aaland- SRFB
Sean Edwards- Stillaguamish	Jim Fox- SRFB
Richard Brocksmith- Hood Canal	Rollie Geppert- SRFB
Selinda Barkhuis- NOPL	
John Sims- Quinault	
Scott Jungblom- Pend Oreille CD	
Jean White- King 8	
Mary Jorgensen- King 8	
Alan Chapman- WRIA 1	
Jeff Breckel- Lower Columbia	
Roy Huberd- Pierce County	
Monica Daniels- Kitsap County	
Jeanette Dorner- Nisqually	
Steve Martin- Snake River	
Shirley Solomon- Skagit Watershed Council	

WDFW and IAC Staff Report

- The Governor's '05-07 budget does not include the requested \$200,000 increase in Lead Entity Operational Grant funding (over the \$3.25 million allocated in past bienniums) needed in order to keep the program whole. The House and Senate are currently developing their own budgets that may or may not include the additional funds. Without this additional support either 1) SRFB will need to fund the difference 2) WDFW services will be cut, or 3) LE grants will be reduced.
- The Governor's budget does include a proposed \$20 million for the SRFB; this is an increase from \$12 million in '03-05. The Federal PCSRF 2005 account is for \$25 million while the 2006 appropriate is still unclear.
- The final state legislative appropriation is unknown; the legislature may apply earmarks for the appropriation as they have done in the past
- On Wednesday, January 26, the House Capital Budget Committee is holding a hearing. Cases will be made for salmon funding. For archived Senate and House hearings, review TVW.org.
- WDFW will conduct a review of LE Operational Grant funding this spring in preparation for the '05-07 biennium. The current allocation system was developed in 2000 and has not had a thorough review of the criteria used to fund grants since then. LEAG will be

invited to participate in the criteria development and an inter-agency team will review applications. The applications will be brief given all the other LE commitments this spring. The due date for new grant proposals was estimated to be in the March/April timeframe.

Monitoring

- Bruce Crawford overviewed the status of the comprehensive statewide monitoring strategy, and some of the key players, such as the Watershed Council, data coordinator, monitoring coordinator (who is Bruce). He talked about the state data bases, including the data portal and its use. The executive order that created the Governor's Forum on Monitoring was discussed. Bruce overviewed the intensively monitored watersheds and status and trends monitoring programs.
- Bruce reported that on February 1, several options will be teed up for consideration by the Forum on Monitoring that address monitoring costs and the large scale questions that monitoring is seeking to answer. For example, there will be a "no action" option as well as an option to fund status and trends monitoring with a pilot program.
- Subsequent to the February meeting of the Forum on Monitoring, the SRFB will determine its role, including funding, at its February 10/11 meeting in Olympia.
- LEAG identified a greater need for the state to coordinate complimentary monitoring activities (especially local efforts). It is important to not duplicate efforts as well as to find ways to ensure monitoring meets the needs of local watersheds, not only the needs of the state and Congress. There seems to be a trend away from local monitoring towards regional scale collection and analysis. LEs are accountable towards their local decision-makers as well who need answers at the watershed scale, and often times those local questions aren't directed solely towards listed species. LEAG members felt that local watersheds/Lead Entities were not represented on the Forum on Monitoring and, therefore, not involved with the decisions about monitoring that effect them. Bruce Crawford welcomed the idea that LEAG have a member on the Forum. LEAG nominated and endorsed Richard Brocksmith, Hood Canal Coordinating Council Lead Entity, as the LEAG Representative on the Governor's Monitoring Forum. His charter is to provide perspectives of local watersheds at the Forum table, solicit input from LEAG and Lead Entities, and report back. In terms of Project Effectiveness Monitoring, it was noted that LEs, not just project sponsors, need to be kept in the loop and informed of pertinent results.

5th Round Funding Cycle Debrief

- Each Lead Entity in attendance was asked to provide a brief perspective of their experiences with the 5th Funding Cycle. In general, the LEAG participants felt positive about the 5th Round and indicated it was a much more congenial than past cycles, although time consuming and lengthy. They appreciated the early interactions with the panel and advisors and the periodic feedback opportunities. There was considerable agreement with the observations that the Review Panel had prepared for the SRFB. There is solid support for a full-fledged funding cycle in 2005 (the 6th Round) free of a major overhaul of the 5th Round process. Specific comments included:
 - Better alignment of multi-LE assessment proposals with LE project lists and funding review process. It was suggested that the multi-LE assessment could be eliminated.

- Increased certainty of funding levels; many “wasted” time submitting more projects than could ever be funded; yet couldn’t take the chance not knowing the funding levels
- Support for the “first increment funding” and increased percentage of the pot allocated based on the first increment formula.
- PRISM worked fairly well, except for those LEs/sponsors tied to NRCS. Some operational improvements and needs were identified.
- Difficult balancing workloads of SRFB funding cycle process and guidance with Regional Recovery Planning and Subbasin processes
- Too much duplication of efforts among SRFB, Regional Recovery Planning, and Subbasin processes. Worst yet, there are conflicting guidance and interpretations among these efforts.
- Process too long and cumbersome; streamlining is needed and necessary.
- Improved clarity is needed, particularly evaluation guidance documents and review panel comments. Community issues evaluation was particularly vague and difficult to understand and track.
- Difficult to create nearshore strategy that fit the guidance provided for identifying and evaluating nearshore projects.
- Unclear expectations about culling the project list submitted to the SRFB. Many felt they were penalized for including all proposed projects even though guidance documents suggested that this would not be the case. It was pointed out that it may be extremely important (for a variety of reasons) for the Lead Entity to submit all projects that are proposed.
- Concerns about the SRFB priorities and expectations regarding projects that address listed and non-listed species.
- Coordination with each Region’s Technical Recovery Team offers an opportunity to streamline SRFB technical and strategic review processes.
- Need to improve coordination with Intensively Monitored Watersheds.
- Targeted Lead Entity and public comment could not be prepared for the December 1 and 2 SRFB meeting due to staff recommended allocations not available until the morning of the December 2.

6th Round Funding Cycle Discussion and Decision

Jim Fox provided a few insights about what he was hearing about the final results of the 5th Round that could effect the 6th Round. Insights included: some people didn’t think the final funding allocations reflected the most important watersheds and the greatest needs of the fish; some thought that the quality of strategies should be evaluated and a determination of the “right” strategy made; some felt that the quality of the list should be evaluated; and that some felt that the second increment should be based on an evaluation of the individual project proposal’s certainty of success and benefits to salmon. Moreover, there was concern about the timing and alignment of Lead Entity strategies with Regional Plans (before embarking on a 6th Funding Cycle).

Options for the 6th Funding Cycle will be discussed at the February 10/11 SRFB meeting.

With this introductory context, LEAG and the other Lead Entities present confirmed its previous position that a 6th Round Funding Cycle should occur in 2005. The Funding Cycle should resemble the evaluation process of the 5th Round, including these major components:

- Focus and Specificity Review of Strategies (not quality);

- Fit of List to Strategy Review (not quality of list);
- A “First Increment” allocation (with a possible increase in the percentage of total funding toward the first increment);
- Technical Advisor Review and Visits of Project Sites .

It was suggested that, if satisfactory to LEs, their 5th round scores for strategy focus and specificity be carried over to the 6th round. This would reduce the workload of the Review Panel by targeting its review toward Lead Entities that chose to revise their strategies (essentially making Focus and Specificity Review of Strategies an option).

Moreover, however, Review Panel review could be further targeted and streamlined by acknowledging the alignment of Lead Entity strategies with Regional Recovery Plans and reliance on the technical guidance and evaluations of habitat strategies (or plans) that are being conducted by the Recovery Regions’ Technical Recovery Teams. For the majority of those LEs that are participating in Regional Recovery Planning at the ESU level, LE strategies are being morphed into the habitat components of the Regional Recovery Plans. It was LEAG’s position that avoiding duplication of and conflicts with the Regional technical review of habitat plans and strategies would enable a 6th Funding Cycle to occur in 2005 that is very consistent with Regional Plans and, at the same time, enable significant streamlining of the SRFB review process.

Pursuant to this recommendation, a small delay of the 6th Round start date is also recommended, notably May 1 (versus March in the 5th Funding Cycle). This delay would enable key work being done now and over the next couple months to complete habitat plans and strategies for the Regional Planning bodies by April 30 (particularly Puget Sound Lead Entities). LEAG further recommended that the final funding allocation decisions be made in December 2005, with project lists and plans/strategies submitted in the August/September timeframe. The start date delay would also provide IAC staff time to prepare the specifics of the 6th Funding Cycle procedures.

Puget Sound Nearshore Project

Tim Smith and Doug Osterman provided a status report of the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project. The name of the project was changed recently to, “Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership”, with a caption of “Restoring Our Ecosystem Health.” This was done to better identify the purpose and breadth of the project, as well as to improve our abilities to secure federal and other funds. The Army Corps of Engineers is proceeding with the scientific assessment of Puget Sound, supported by the Nearshore Science Team. The key products of the project to date include Conceptual Model/Guidance document, Nearshore Restoration Principles, and an annotated bibliography (of the salmon in the nearshore white paper that is not available). These products are on the website. Under development include a Research Plan, a Conceptual Model Narrative Report, and Nearshore Typology Report. Early action and demonstration projects are being identified and coordinated with the federal Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters program and other funding opportunities.

Legislative Hearing and Day at the Legislature for LEs

Tim Smith is coordinating a legislative hearing and show and tell opportunity aimed at showcasing the efforts of Lead Entities in salmon planning and recovery. Recently regional plans/boards have gotten the most attention from the legislature, but it is especially important this session to remind the legislature of the valuable and effective role of local groups in

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preparing habitat strategies and plans, and implementing those plans. In addition to a hearing, it is envisioned that Lead Entities would be given an opportunity to display information in the capitol foyer as well as to meet and greet legislators at a day-end reception. Tim encourages the participation of Lead Entity Coordinators, citizens, and others closely involved in Lead Entity work. WDFW will coordinate this event with Lead Entities. February is the targeted timeframe for the event. All in attendance supported this generous offer.